



A very happy surprise birthday for Michelle Figer with her Aruban friends!

Donald and Michelle Figer of Cleveland, Ohio are long-time visitors to Aruba, he has been coming here for thirty-eight years, and Michelle has joined Donald in his devotion to the island for the last eighteen. After having stayed at every resort Aruba has to offer, they finally settled in and purchased a timeshare at the Divi Phoenix Resort ten years ago. When they were figuring out which weeks they wished to buy, they realized that the best place for them to be when they celebrated their birthdays was on the island and with the friends they have come to know and love so much. Therefore, they now spend the entire month of January for Donald's birthday, and the first two weeks in May for Michelle's, enjoying Aruba and all it has to offer.

Michelle began her day on Tuesday thinking that she would be savoring their usual lunch by the beach at one of the many hotel beachfront restaurants, her favorite way to dine while in Aruba, but a special surprise awaited her. Donald had arranged a belated birthday party so it would be a genuine surprise, at one of their favorite restaurants, the Sunset Beach Bistro at the Divi Phoenix. Michelle got her lunch by the sea, which is a necessity, but also the company of some of her most beloved friends in Aruba, who regaled her with surprise gifts and the warm affection they have developed over the years for not only this charming and sincere lady, but her husband as well.

Gerrit Graham of the Divi Village and The Links Golf Course joined them for the celebration, as did Astrid Muller, General Manager of the Divi Phoenix, and Mirella from its staff. Matos, general factotum of Chez Mathilde, and Sophie from the Sunset Grill at the Radisson Resort were also welcome guests, sharing champagne, cake and a lovely lunch by the sea.

Donald reminisced a bit about the changes he has seen in his long years coming to Aruba. He remembers a time when he used to be able to get a horse from one of the first stables on the island renting to tourists and ride into Oranjestad, tie up his horse, have breakfast, and ride back out to the hotels afterwards. He remembers taking his young sons to see the Olde Molen in Palm Beach while it was still grinding corn.

Donald does assert that one thing has never changed about the island, and that is the sincere warmth and hospitality of the Aruban people, which keeps him and Michelle coming back year after year.

Pabien Michelle on another birthday, with best wishes to enjoy many more in the place and with people that you love best!